(b) BSNL has not specifically planned for the coverage of rural areas with Cellular Service. However, such areas that are enroute to National Highway/Important State Highway which are being covered as part of roll out plan may get incidental coverage due to coverage of Highway.

Tele-density

1655. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that almost half of the country *{i.e.* 13 out of 27 circles) has missed the telecom revolution and have a much lower tele-density than the pan-Indian average of 7.02 as on the 31st March, 2004;

(b) whether it is a fact that the telephonic penetration per 100 people in these 13 circles ranged between 1.5 and 5; and

(c) if so, the efforts Government propose to make so that the telecom revolution reaches everywhere?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) As per statistics available, 13 circles have registered a teledensity ranging between 1.5 and 5.

(c) Telecom Services, both landline and mobile, are available in all the circles. The teledensity in different regions is a function of demand. Government are working towards doubling the current teledensity levels in the next two years or so.

Reduction in the rates of Private Lease-hold International Telecommunication Lines

1-1656. SHRIMATI SAVITA SHARDA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Telecom Regulatory Authority of India proposes to reduce sharply the rates of Private Lease-hold International Telecommunications Lines (IPLC) with a view to making high transmission

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

capacity lines affordable to promote a swift-accessible Internet in the country.

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when, the final decision would be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) to (c) TRAI has issued a consultation paper entitled "Fixation of Ceiling Tariff for International Private Leased Circuits (Half Circuit)" on 30th April, 2004 inviting the comments of various stakeholders. Open House Discussions were also held in Delhi and Bangalore. The matter is presently under the consideration of TRAI.

New telephone exchanges in Uttaranchal

†1657. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the places where new telephone exchanges have been opened in the State of Uttaranchal during the last three years;

(b) whether a new exchange has been opened at Sanglakoti in Pauri also;

(c) whether Government are aware of the fact that most of these exchanges including Sanglakoti exchange are not working properly; and

(d) if so, the steps proposed to be taken to improve their services?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) The places where new telephone exchanges have been opened in the State of Uttaranchal during the last three years are given in the Annexure.

(b) No new exchange has been opened at Sanglakoti in Pauri.

(c) All the exchanges given in the enclosed Statement are working satisfactorily *{See* below).

(d) Not applicable in view of (c) above.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.